



# Family Planning

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## *contraceptive methods*

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control [www.scdhec.gov/familyplanning](http://www.scdhec.gov/familyplanning)





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# birth control methods

you have choices!

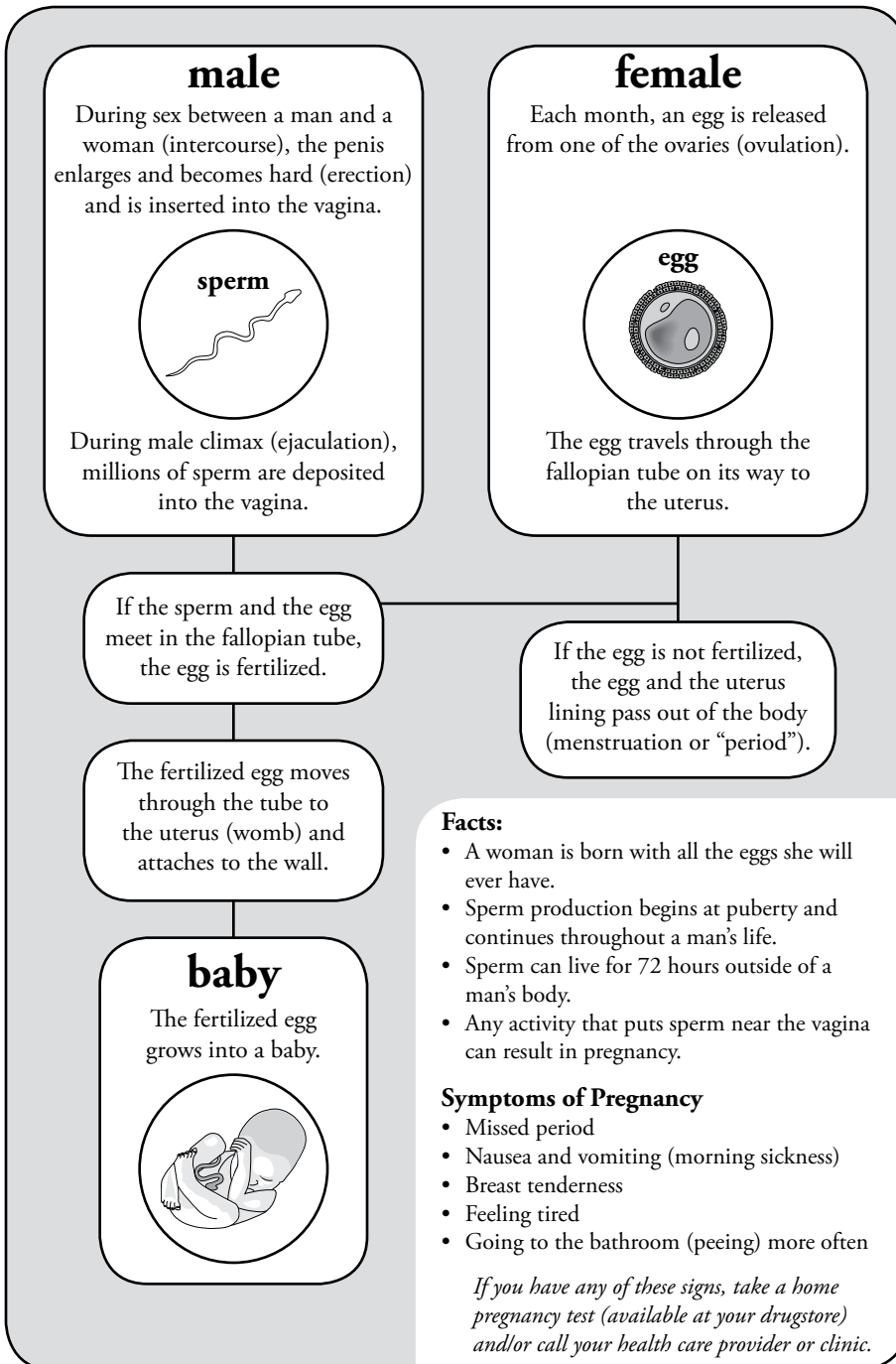
This booklet explains how pregnancy happens and tells you about most methods of birth control (contraception). There are many effective methods. You choose the one you want to use.

If you want to use birth control, visit your health care provider; or the family planning clinic at your local public health department. They can help you find the method that is best for you and your partner. If you must wait for an appointment, you can get over-the-counter birth control at the drugstore or public health department.

A condom may lower your chances for getting some sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including the virus that causes HIV/AIDS. However, there is no guarantee that any birth control method will totally protect you.

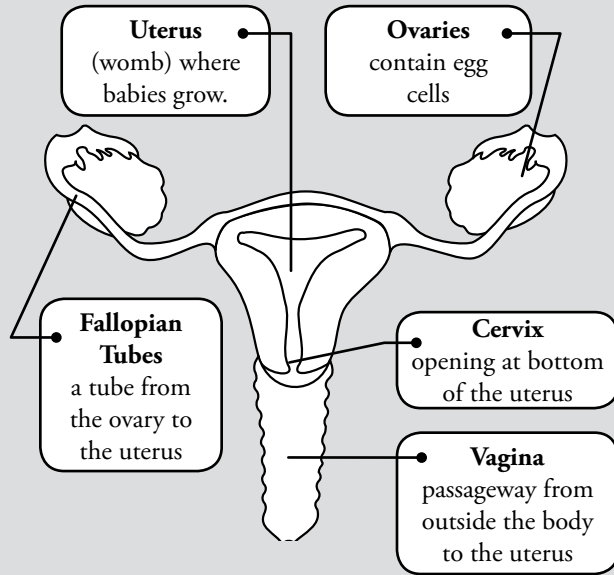


# how pregnancy happens

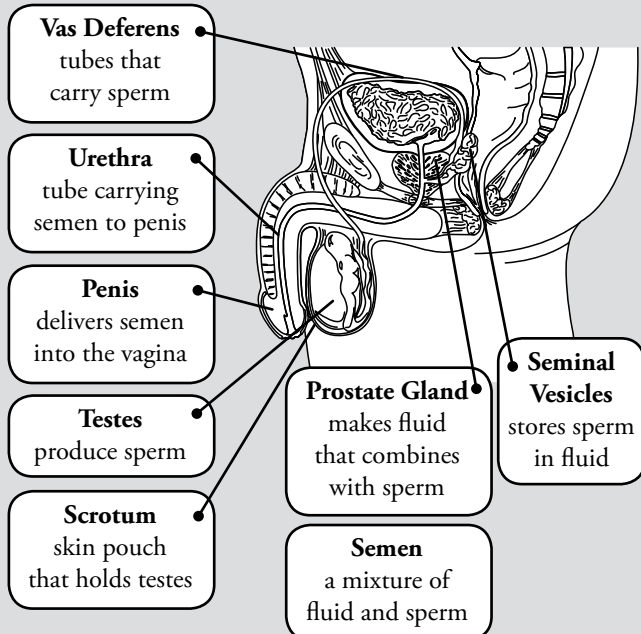


# reproductive anatomy

## female



## male





# abstinence

Abstinence means not having sex (intercourse) or keeping sperm away from the vagina. Sperm anywhere near the vagina can cause a pregnancy. Many people use abstinence at different times in their lives. If you choose to use this method, you must talk about it with your partner. This method takes a strong commitment from both of you to make it work.

## + Advantages:

- It protects you from pregnancy.
- It protects you from STDs and HIV/AIDS.
- You can use it at any time.
- It does not cost anything.
- Both partners are part of the decision.

## - Disadvantages:

- It is often hard to stick to the decision to say “no” to sex.

## ? How well does abstinence prevent pregnancy?

- Abstinence is 100 percent effective. If you don’t have sex, you will not get pregnant.





# birth control pills

## combined oral contraceptives

Birth control pills contain hormones that prevent pregnancy. These hormones are estrogen and progestin. One pill is taken every day of the month. The hormones in the combined pills may work in one of the following ways: by preventing the egg's release from the ovary; by thickening the cervical mucus so sperm cannot reach the egg; or by thinning the inside lining of the uterus.

### + Advantages:

- Periods are usually lighter, less painful, and regular.
- Oral contraceptives help protect against cancer of the ovaries and womb.
- Oral contraceptives help protect against pelvic inflammatory disease.
- Pills are convenient.

### - Disadvantages:

- They do not provide protection against STDs and HIV/AIDS, so always use a condom PLUS the pill.
- They do not work as well when taken along with some medicines, like antibiotics. Always tell your health care provider if you are taking birth control pills.
- You may have some side effects such as breast tenderness, spotting between periods, headaches, weight change, nausea, change in sex drive, or depression. Changing your pill prescription may relieve these side effects.
- Rare and serious side effects include blood clots, heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, and liver or gall bladder problems.
- You must take a pill at the same time every day.
- If you smoke, you have a greater risk of having a heart attack. Let your health care provider know that you smoke. This will help the health care provider decide if you should take the pill.
- Pills may increase the risk for a rare cervical cancer called adenocarcinoma. No extra test for this is required other than your regular Pap smear.

# birth control pills continued

## ❓ How well does the pill prevent pregnancy?

- If you use it correctly every time, there is about a 99 percent chance you will not get pregnant.

## ❓ How to use the pill:

- Take one pill every day at the same time. You will be given instructions on when to start your pills and what to do if you miss one. If you have questions, call the clinic. Your questions can often be answered over the phone.



# mini pills

## progestin-only oral contraceptives

Mini pills are a type of birth control pill. Mini pills contain the hormone progestin, which prevents pregnancy. The mini pill may work in one of the following ways: by preventing the egg's release from the woman's ovaries; by thickening the cervical mucus so sperm can't reach the egg; or by thinning the inside lining of the uterus.

### + Advantages:

- They are convenient.
- You may have fewer cramps.
- They can be used when breastfeeding.

### - Disadvantages:

- They do not provide protection against STDs and HIV/AIDS, so always use a condom PLUS the mini pill.
- They do not work as well if taken with along with certain medicines. If you are sick and the health care provider is going to prescribe medicine, tell the health care provider that you are taking the mini pill. The health care provider will let you know if you need to use an additional method of birth control while you are on your medicine.
- You may have some side effects, such as irregular or missed periods, and spotting.
- You must use a back-up birth control method such as condoms and film/foam if you are three hours or more late taking the mini pill.

### ? How well does the mini pill prevent pregnancy?

- If you use it correctly every time, there is about a 99 percent chance you will not get pregnant.

### ? How to use the mini pill:

- Take one pill every day at the same time each day. You will get instructions on when to start your pills and what to do if you miss one. If you have questions, call the clinic. Your questions can often be answered over the phone.

# condoms – female

A female condom is a throwaway, single-use polyurethane covering that is placed into the vagina. It works by stopping sperm from reaching the womb.

## + Advantages:

- You can insert them up to eight hours before sex.
- You do not need a prescription to buy them.
- They provide some protection from STDs and HIV/AIDS.

## - Disadvantages:

- Female condoms may interrupt foreplay.
- Female condoms may be difficult to use.

## ? How well does the female condom prevent pregnancy?

- If you use it correctly every time, you have about a 95 percent chance of not getting pregnant. The chance of pregnancy is even less if you use female condoms PLUS another kind of birth control.

## ? How to use the female condom:

1. Choose a position that is comfortable: squat, raise one leg, sit or lie down.
2. Squeeze the inner ring with thumb and middle finger (so it becomes long and narrow). Insert the inner ring and sheath into the opening of the vagina. Gently insert the inner ring into the vagina and feel it go up. Place the index finger inside of the condom and push the inner ring as far as it will go. Make sure the condom is inserted straight, and is not twisted inside the vagina. The outer ring should remain on the outside of the vagina.
3. Hold onto the penis while carefully putting it into the condom. Be careful not to let the penis touch anything outside the condom. The outer ring should be held against the vagina so the condom won't slip during sex.



# condoms – male

A male condom is a throwaway, single-use thin covering made of latex, polyurethane, or a natural membrane that fits over an erect penis. It works by preventing the sperm from reaching the womb. Male condoms come in many colors, styles and sizes.

## ➕ **Advantages:**

- Male condoms are inexpensive.
- No prescription is needed to buy male condoms.
- Male condoms provide some protection from STDs and HIV/AIDS.

## ➖ **Disadvantages:**

- Men and women can be allergic to the rubber.
- Male condoms can break.
- You might not like the feel or smell of male condoms.
- Male condoms may interrupt foreplay.

## ❓ **How well does the male condom prevent pregnancy?**

- If your partner uses male condoms correctly every time, there is about a 98 percent chance that you will not get pregnant. The chance of pregnancy is even lower if you use male condoms PLUS another form of birth control.

## ⚠️ **Use a condom every time you have sex.**

- Use a new condom every time you have sex. If you notice a tear or hole in the condom, do not use it. Do not open condom packages with your teeth or other sharp objects.

## ❓ **How to use a male condom**

1. Place the unrolled condom over the tip of the erect penis. Hold onto the end to leave a little space for semen.
2. Roll the condom over the whole length of the penis before you begin having sex.
3. After having sex and before the penis becomes soft, hold on to the condom rim as the penis is removed from the vagina, so the condom won't slip off.
4. After removing the condom, tie a knot in the condom and throw the condom in the trash. Do not flush condoms down the toilet.

# condoms – male continued

Condoms work better if used with spermicidal foam, jellies or creams.

Use extra lubrication to reduce the chance of the condom breaking. For extra lubrication, use a lubricating jelly or spermicide you can buy in a drugstore without a prescription. Do not use petroleum jelly, baby oil, lotion, vegetable shortening or other oil-based lubricants. These can weaken the condom. Ask the pharmacist if you are not sure which lubricant to buy.

Latex condoms are recommended (unless you or your partner are allergic to latex.) Many condoms have an expiration date printed on the package. ***Check the expiration date. If the expiration date has passed, don't use the condom.***

Because heat destroys condoms, condoms left for more than a month in hot places (wallets or cars) must not be used.



# contraceptive patch

The contraceptive patch contains hormones that prevent pregnancy. These hormones are estrogen and progestin. The patch may work in one of the following ways: by preventing the egg's release from the ovary; by thickening the cervical mucus so sperm can't reach the egg; or by thinning the inside lining of the uterus.

## + Advantages:

- Monthly periods are lighter, less painful, and regular.
- It helps protect against cancer of the ovaries and womb.
- It helps protect against pelvic inflammatory disease.
- The patch is ideal for women who forget to take pills regularly.



## - Disadvantages:

- It does not provide protection against STDs and HIV/AIDS, so always use a condom PLUS the patch.
- You may have some side effects such as breast tenderness, spotting between periods, headaches, weight change, nausea, change in sex drive, or depression.
- Rare and serious side effects include blood clots, heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, and liver or gall bladder problems.
- If you smoke, you have a greater risk of having a heart attack. Let your health care provider know that you smoke. It will help your health care provider decide if you should use the patch.
- You must remove and replace the patch weekly.
- The patch may become partially or completely detached.
- The skin under the patch sometimes gets irritated.
- The patch may be slightly less effective for women weighing more than 198 pounds (90 kg).

## ? How well does the patch prevent pregnancy?

- You use it correctly every time, there is about a 99 percent chance you will not get pregnant.

## ? How to use the patch:

- Once a week for three weeks in a row, stick a patch to the lower abdomen, hips, upper back, or back part of the upper arm. After the third week, leave the patch off for one week so you can have your period. You will get instructions on when to start using your patch, and where to put it on. If you have questions, call the clinic; your questions can often be answered over the phone.



# creams, jellies, foams, suppositories & film spermicides

Creams, jellies, foams, suppositories and film all contain spermicides (a chemical that kills sperm). Spermicides work by blocking the cervix (opening to the uterus) and by killing sperm.

## + Advantages:

- They are inexpensive.
- No prescription is needed to buy them.
- They provide extra lubrication during sex.

## - Disadvantages:

- They do not provide protection against STDs and HIV/AIDS, so always use a condom, too.
- Some spermicides may irritate the vagina or penis and increase your chance of getting HIV/AIDS.
- They can be messy to use.
- They may interrupt foreplay.

## ? How well do spermicides prevent pregnancy?

- If you use spermicides correctly every time, there is about an 82 percent chance you will not get pregnant. The chance of pregnancy is even less if you use spermicides PLUS another kind of birth control.

## ! General information for all spermicides

- Do not use any product if the package was open when you bought it.
- **Check the expiration date.** Use the spermicide before it expires.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after inserting spermicide.
- Read the package instructions to be sure you understand the time needed for the product to spread and work.
- The spermicide must be put into the vagina before the penis touches the vagina. A new application of spermicide is needed each time you have sex.
- Do not douche or rinse the vagina for six hours after sex.

## ❗ How to use cream, foam, or gel spermicide

1. Fill plastic applicator with spermicide. (If you are using a foam, shake the canister at least 20 times before filling the applicator.)
2. Insert the applicator into the vagina as far as it will comfortably go.
3. Holding the applicator steady, push the plunger to release the spermicide. The spermicide works immediately.
4. Finish having sex within 60 minutes of inserting spermicide.

## ❗ How to use film spermicide

1. Be sure your fingers are completely dry.
2. Place one folded sheet of film on your fingertip and slide it along the back wall of the vagina as far as possible. The film should rest on or near the cervix. Film begins working in 15 minutes.
3. Finish having sex within 60 minutes of inserting film.

## ❗ How to use suppository or tablet spermicide

1. Remove the wrapping and slide the suppository or tablet into the vagina.
2. Push the suppository or tablet along the back wall of the vagina as far as possible so that it rests on or near the cervix.
3. Finish having sex within 60 minutes of inserting suppository or tablet.

## ❗ How to take care of spermicides and applicators

- Store spermicides in a place that is clean, cool and dark.
- Wash the applicator after each use with plain soap and warm water.
- Do not use powder on the applicator.



# depo provera

Depo Provera is a birth control shot. The shot contains the hormone progestin. Depo Provera may work in one of the following ways: by preventing the egg's release from the woman's ovaries; by thickening the cervical mucus so sperm can't reach the egg; or by thinning the inside lining of the uterus.

## + Advantages:

- A woman is protected from pregnancy for 13 weeks (about three months).
- Depo Provera is convenient.

## - Disadvantages:

- Most women notice a change in how often they have their periods. Periods may stop.
- Some women have side effects, such as a weight change or bone thinning.
- Prolonged use (greater than two years) may result in significant bone thinning which may not be completely reversible.
- Depo Provera does not protect you against STDs or HIV/AIDS, so always use a condom PLUS Depo Provera.
- Women must see a health care provider every three months to get another shot.

## ? How well does Depo Provera prevent pregnancy?

- If you use it correctly every time, there is about a 99 percent chance that you will not get pregnant.

## ? How to use the Depo Provera:

- Every 13 weeks, you should get a shot from your health care provider.



# diaphragm

The diaphragm is a shallow, flexible rubber cup that fits high inside the vagina. It covers the cervix and blocks sperm from reaching the womb. A spermicide (such as gel or cream) is also used with the diaphragm. Diaphragms come in several sizes. You will need to visit your health care provider so you can be measured for a diaphragm that fits you. The health care provider will show you how to insert the diaphragm and check for correct placement.

## ⊕ **Advantages:**

- It can be put into the vagina up to six hours before sex.
- There are no side effects unless you are allergic to latex or spermicide.

## ⊖ **Disadvantages:**

- Some women develop bladder infections.
- Some women develop yeast infections.
- Some women don't like putting objects inside their vaginas.
- Some women may find the diaphragm hard to insert.
- The diaphragm can get holes in it.
- Some women may develop Toxic Shock Syndrome.
- The spermicide used with the diaphragm does not provide protection against STDs or HIV/AIDS, so always use a condom PLUS the diaphragm and spermicide.

## ❓ **How well does the diaphragm prevent pregnancy?**

- If you use it correctly every time, there is about a 94 percent chance you will not get pregnant.



# diaphragm continued

## ❓ How to use the diaphragm:

1. Wash your hands with plain soap and water.
2. Hold the diaphragm with the dome down (like a cup).
3. Squeeze about 1 tablespoon of the spermicidal jelly or cream into the dome. Spread it around the inside of the rim with your fingers.
4. To put the diaphragm in, hold it in one hand between the thumb and fingers. Hold the diaphragm with the dome down (like a cup). Squeeze the opposite sides of the rim together so the diaphragm folds.
5. You can insert the diaphragm while squatting, lying on your back, or standing with one foot propped up. Spread your vagina open with your other hand. Push the folded diaphragm into the vagina.
6. Push the diaphragm down and along the back wall of the vagina as far as it will go. Tuck the front rim up along the top of the vagina behind the pubic bone. Check to make sure it is covering the cervix.
7. If inserted properly, you should not be able to feel the diaphragm except with your fingers.
8. Each time you have sex, insert more spermicidal cream or jelly into the vagina, leaving the diaphragm in place.
9. After sex, leave the diaphragm in for six hours. Do not douche or rinse the vagina.

## ⚠ Care of the diaphragm

- If you lose or gain weight (20 or more pounds), you may need to have the size of your diaphragm changed.
- Every few months, check the diaphragm for holes and breakdown of the rubber.



# implanon<sup>®</sup> contraceptive implants

Implanon<sup>®</sup> is a small, rod-shaped contraceptive (birth control) implant. It is inserted under the skin of the upper part of a woman's arm. Implanon<sup>®</sup> contains a hormone called progestin. The contraceptive implant works by preventing the egg's release from the ovary. It also works by making the mucous in a woman's cervix thicker so sperm can't reach the egg and by thinning the inside lining of the uterus.

## + Advantages:

- A woman is protected from pregnancy for three years.
- A contraceptive implant is convenient.
- You may have a lighter period and fewer cramps.
- Implanon<sup>®</sup> can be used when breastfeeding.

## - Disadvantages:

- You will probably have irregular periods.
- It does not provide protection against STDs and HIV/AIDS, so always use a condom.

## ? How well does Implanon<sup>®</sup> contraception prevent pregnancy?

- There is about a 99 percent chance that you will not get pregnant when using Implanon<sup>®</sup>.

## ? How to use Implanon<sup>®</sup>:

- Check the site where Implanon<sup>®</sup> was inserted about once a month. Check with your health care provider if you cannot feel the contraceptive implant.



# iud

## intrauterine device

An IUD is a small piece of flexible plastic or metal that contains copper or a hormone. Your health care provider puts the IUD into the uterus through the vagina. The IUD works by preventing sperm from fertilizing an egg.

### + **Advantages:**

- The IUD is convenient.
- The copper IUD works for at least 10 years. Your health care provider can remove it before 10 years are up.
- Some hormonal IUDs work for at least five years. Your health care provider can remove it before five years are up.

### - **Disadvantages:**

- The IUD does not provide any protection against HIV/AIDS or STDs, so always use a condom PLUS the IUD.
- Women who have more than one sex partner (or have partners who do) should not use the IUD because of possible infection. Infections can be even more serious when a woman has an IUD.
- There may be cramping or pain when the IUD is inserted.
- Some women who have an IUD have more painful cramps and heavier bleeding during their periods.
- The IUD can come out suddenly.

### ? **How well does the IUD prevent pregnancy?**

- There is about a 99 percent chance you will not get pregnant while using an IUD.

### ? **How to use the IUD:**

- To make sure your IUD is in place, check the string once a month, after your period or if you have unusual cramps or bleeding. Never pull on the string.



## 🔊 To check the IUD string:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Use your second and third fingers together to reach several inches inside your vagina. Find the cervix, a round, firm bump that feels like the tip of your nose.
3. Check that the IUD string trails out of the small opening in the middle of the cervix.

## 🔊 Early warning signs of problems:

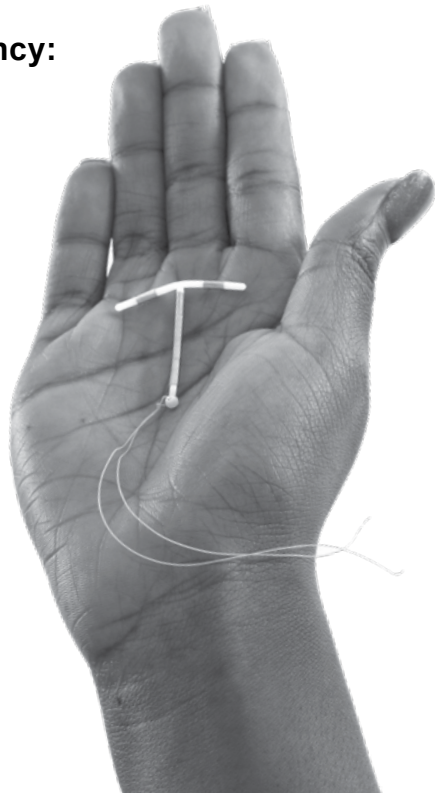
- A late period, or abnormal spotting or bleeding
- Stomach pain, or pain when you have sex.
- If you know you've been exposed to an STD
- An unusual vaginal discharge
- Not feeling well, fever, or chills
- String missing, shorter, or longer

*If you notice any of these signs, call your health care provider right away. Your IUD may need to be removed or you may need medicine. Go to the emergency room if the clinic is closed.*

*If you miss a period, get a pregnancy test.*

## 🔊 You may not be protected from pregnancy:

- If you cannot feel the string
- If you can feel the plastic part of the IUD
- If the string is shorter, longer, or missing



# natural family planning (NFP)

NFP is a method where couples do not have sex on “fertile days.” Fertile days are the days of the month when a woman is most likely to get pregnant. Fertile days are the days just before, during, and just after an egg is released (ovulation). Using this method, a woman records her temperature, type of vaginal fluid and period (menstrual cycle) on a calendar each day. This record helps predict when she is most likely to get pregnant.

## + Advantages:

- The method teaches women about their fertility patterns.
- Both partners play a part in preventing a pregnancy.

## - Disadvantages:

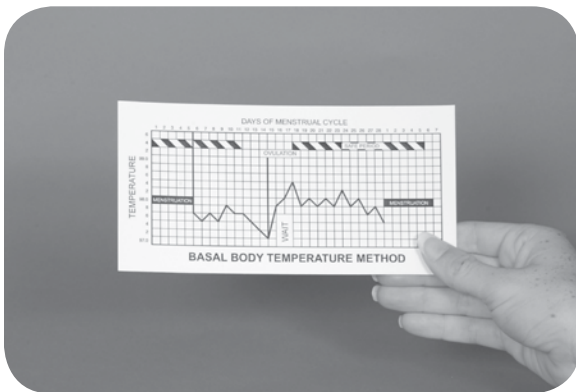
- NFP is difficult to use if your period is irregular.
- It takes time to learn how to use this method.
- There will be days when you must NOT have sex.
- NFP does not protect you from STDs or the virus that causes HIV/AIDS, so use a condom when you have sex.

## ? How well does the NFP method prevent pregnancy?

- If you use this method correctly every time and have regular periods, there is a 95-97 percent chance you will not get pregnant.

## ? How to use the NFP method

- The health care provider will tell you how to use this method. If you have questions, call the clinic. Your questions can be answered over the phone.



# vaginal ring

The vaginal ring contains hormones that prevent pregnancy. The vaginal ring may work in one of the following ways: by preventing the egg's release from the ovary; by thickening the cervical mucus so sperm can't reach the egg; or by thinning the inside lining of the uterus. No special accuracy is required for ring placement; hormones are absorbed from anywhere in the vagina.

## + Advantages:

- Periods are more regular.

## - Disadvantages:

- Spotting may occur.
- Some women do not like putting objects inside their vaginas.
- They do not provide protection against STDs and HIV/AIDS, so always use a condom PLUS the vaginal ring.
- You may have some side effects such as breast tenderness, spotting between periods, headaches, weight changes, nausea, change in sex drive, or depression.
- Rare and serious side effects include blood clots, heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, and liver or gall bladder problems.
- If you smoke, you have a greater risk of having a heart attack. Let your health care provider know that you smoke. This will help the health care provider decide if you should use the ring.

## ? How well does the vaginal ring prevent pregnancy?

- If you use it correctly every time, there is about a 99 percent chance you will not get pregnant.

## ? How to use the ring:

- Insert the ring anywhere into the vagina and leave it in place for three weeks. After the third week, remove the ring and leave it out for one week so you can have your period. You will get instructions on when to start using your ring. If you have questions, call the clinic. Your questions can often be answered over the phone.



# sterilization

Both men and women can be sterilized.

Sterilization is a permanent method of birth control. If you are a woman, after you are sterilized you will NEVER be able to get pregnant. If you are a man, after you are sterilized you will NEVER be able to father a child. You should not be sterilized unless you are sure that you do not want any more children. To consent for sterilization, you must be at least 21 years old, understand what sterilization means, and be able to make this decision yourself.

Sterilization for men is called a *vasectomy*. This surgery is done in the health care provider's office. The health care provider cuts and seals the tubes that carry the man's sperm.

Sterilization for women is called a *tubal ligation*. This surgery may be done as an outpatient procedure. The fallopian tubes that carry the woman's eggs are cut and sealed.

## + Advantages:

- There are no significant long-term effects from sterilization.

## - Disadvantages:

- The procedure is usually not reversible.
- It does not offer protection against STDs or HIV/AIDS, so always use a condom.
- There is a small chance of complications or infection after the surgery.

## ? How well does sterilization prevent pregnancy?

- If you are sterilized, there is about a 99 percent chance that you will not get pregnant.

## ? How to use sterilization:

- Talk to your health care provider for more information about this method of birth control.



# emergency contraception

With the emergency contraception method, you take birth control pills (oral contraceptives) after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. The hormones (estrogen and/or progestin) in the pills may work in one of the following ways: by preventing the egg's release from the ovary; by interfering with the movement of sperm; or by thinning the inside lining of the uterus.

If you are already pregnant, emergency contraception will not work. It will not hurt your baby.

## + **Advantages:**

- It can be taken within 120 hours from the time of unprotected sex.

## - **Disadvantages:**

- It should not be used as a regular method of birth control. It does not work as well as other methods.
- It does not provide protection against STDs and HIV/AIDS, so always use a condom.
- Depending on the type of pill used, it may cause nausea, vomiting, breast tenderness and/or headaches.

## ? **How well does emergency contraception prevent pregnancy?**

- If you use emergency contraception, there is about a 75 percent chance you will not get pregnant. Emergency contraception works best if it is taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex.

## ? **How to use emergency contraception:**

- Your health care provider will tell you how to take the pills.

*After using emergency contraception, it is a good idea to begin using a regular method of birth control.*

*Schedule  
your visit  
today!*

Call: 1-855-4-SCDHEC

Visit: [www.scdhec.gov/familyplanning](http://www.scdhec.gov/familyplanning)



Family Planning

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